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FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6072
INFO RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS PRIORITY 1351
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0303
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1907
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0856
RHMFSS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 000887

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, INR/AA
BAGHDAD FOR DMCCULLOUGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/21/2019

TAGS: PARM PREL PGOV NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: IRANIAN URANIUM DEMARCHE DELIVERED

REF: STATE 50613

Classified By: Political Counselor Walter N.S. Pflaumer for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Polcouns and Poloff delivered reftel demarche to Maria Laose, Director of the Second United Nations (UN) Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on May 21. Laose formerly worked for the Nigerian mission to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna and is their point person for matters relating to the IAEA, the Iranian nuclear program and non-proliferation in general.

¶2. (C) Ms. Laose said that although Nigeria maintains trade relations with Iran, this "does not include anything nuclear." Laose did mention that Professor S. B. Elegba the Director General of the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (who has approval authority over all nuclear matters) had told her that some unnamed entities had recently approached him for certification of nuclear joint ventures, but that he had not granted permission. According to Laose, Elegba has a close relationship with the IAEA and its Director General Mohamed ElBaradei. "Elegba is very strict. This would not pass through him without his knowing the consequences." Laose continued, "Be at ease... Nigeria is not interested in getting involved with Iran on this." Laose agreed to keep an open line of communication between the GON and U.S. Mission on such a sensitive topic. Post will report any further responses septel.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: The GON is clearly sensitive to any perceived involvement with Iran on nuclear matters, particularly after the kerfuffle caused on August 28, 2008 when, at the conclusion of a visit by a mid-level Iranian trade delegation, the press falsely reported (perhaps with Iranian encouragement) that Nigeria had signed a nuclear deal with Iran. End comment.

SANDERS